Claire Davies KC



YEAR OF CALL 1999

Claire is a fearless and formidable KC who wins cases against the odds. She specialises in homicide, organised crime, human trafficking, and financial crime, and is recognised in both leading legal directories, Chambers (formerly known as Chambers & Partners), and the Legal 500. Claire is Leader of the South Eastern Circuit and Chair-elect of the Bar Council.

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Chambers RANKED IN UK Bar 2026 Claire Davies KC

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Career Overview

Claire has been a member of Chambers since 2001 and is our most senior female member. She was appointed a Recorder of the Crown Court in 2016, and authorised to sit at the Central Criminal Court in 2022. She has served as Leader of the South Eastern Circuit for 2025 and 2026.

Claire regularly undertakes the most serious and complex cases, many of them high profile, and specialises in murder, serious organised crime, financial crime, terrorism, human trafficking, drugs, health and safety, and sexual offences. She is frequently commended for her attention to detail, her tactical approach to cases, her persuasive and powerful closing speeches, her exceptional client care, and her ability to win cases against the odds. Claire is fearless in court.

In recent years her practice has included substantial cases involving multi-handed "gang" murders, terrorism, and "baby shaking" cases. She is also an advocacy trainer and vulnerable witness facilitator, and her practice has included appearing before the Supreme Court of Gibraltar.

Claire is experienced in VHCC cases, both as counsel and, formerly, as an Independent Cost Assessor for VHCC work

and an experienced trainer in Vulnerable Witness Advocacy (UK and abroad), Children in the Law Advocacy and Advocacy.

Recognition:

Chambers 2027 edn “Claire is a superb advocate and an exceptional cross-examiner. Her tactical precision stands her clients in great stead… a very thorough and highly competent advocate who is very hardworking… a formidable practice and she has instructing solicitors flocking to her… a very popular advocate and a real fighter for her clients. She will take on any battle.” “Claire is excellent and has been doing a fantastic job as leader of the South Eastern Circuit.”

Legal 500 2027 edn “Claire Davies KC is a calm, authoritative, and compelling advocate. She has excellent judgment, is unfailingly well prepared, and possesses a natural ability to distill complex factual and legal issues into clear, persuasive submissions. She combines intellectual rigor with a genuine passion for her cases while maintaining the measured and courteous advocacy that earns the respect of judges and opponents alike. Her strategic instincts are consistently sound, and she inspires confidence in those she represents.”

Chambers and Partners 2026 edn "She is extremely pleasant and thorough and fights hard for lay client's corner", "Is very good" and "very jury friendly, very engaging and has a nice manner"

Legal 500 2026 edn "Claire is tenacious. her advocacy is of an impressively high standard".

Chambers and Partners 2024 edn "She does a fabulous, fabulous job and is always able to adapt her style to suit the needs of the case" "She knows her law and procedure and her client care is excellent"

Legal 500 2024 edn. "Claire is an incredibly hard working counsel who never gives up on a client or case. She works extremely hard to develop a formindable understanding of the papers which she deploys with skill to persuade both Judges and juries"

Chambers and Partners 2023 edn "She is a reassuring presence, and a barrister with great ability and judgement"

Legal 500 2023 edn "Claire is an incredibly hard-working counsel who never gives up on a client or a case. She works extremely hard to develop a formidable understanding of the papers which she deploys with skill to persuade both Judges and juries".

Chambers and Partners 2022 edn “Devastating in her deployment of the detail and a formidable opponent and powerful closing speeches winning cases against the odds. In addition, puts her clients at ease with her approachable

style".

Legal 500 2022 edn "Claire's easy-going style endears her to clients, solicitors and judges alike, yet in court she has a powerful, formidable presence, and is bold, strong and robust when necessary."

Legal 500 2021 edn "Claire is the most sought after of leading juniors. She is known for her devastating cross examination, extremely persuasive ability in legal arguments and her eloquent and powerful closing speeches. Juries are in awe of her. Her peers admire her. She is our go to female leader in cases of complexity and those involving vulnerable witnesses. A true leader in her field. Approachable, unflappable, meticulous and all round star performer."

Chambers and Partners 2021 edn "Claire is a sensible, serious and committed advocate who is good at dealing with difficult clients." "A very able advocate with excellent client care skills. She is also an excellent mitigator who is able to draw on her experience as a Recorder to determine the best way to persuade a sentencing judge"

Chambers and Partners and Legal 500 2020 edn as "a dynamic advocate with gravitas and presence in court."

Area of Practice

- Homicide
- Fraud / Financial crime
- Serious Organised Crime
- Modern Slavery / Human trafficking
- Terrorism
- Serious Sexual offences

Notable Cases

Homicide

R v A – Winchester Crown Court – Murder

Claire represented one of the main defendants facing a murder charge in a four-month, ten-handed trial. The case concerned an acid attack murder alleged to be in revenge for non-payment relating to a drugs conspiracy. Claire deployed close analysis of the CCTV and telephone evidence as part of the defence case.

R v A – Reading Crown Court – Attempted Murder of a baby

Claire represented a mother accused of shaking her baby and attempting to suffocate her.

R v P – Central Criminal Court – Attempted Murder

Claire represented the defendant, who had stabbed an 11-year-old girl several times in Leicester Square. Psychiatrists were instructed to consider the defendant's mental state at the time of the offence, and following service of the expert's report, the prosecution accepted a plea to s18 OAPA 1861. Following evidence given at the sentence hearing, the defendant received an indefinite hospital order. The case was reported by the BBC and Sky News.

R v N – Woolwich Crown Court – Murder

Claire represented the defendant, who faced one count of the murder of his wife while children were still in the premises at night. Having alerted others to the fact that his wife was injured, the defendant handed himself in at a police station. He sought to advance a defence of loss of control.

R v R – Central Criminal Court – Attempted Murders and Firearms

Claire represented the defendant, who was accused of a series of attempted murders and shootings, described by the judge as potentially contract shootings. He disguised himself as a Deliveroo driver to carry out the shootings, including on an 8-year-old girl. Hours of CCTV footage were considered, and firearms, DNA, telephone, and lyrics experts were all cross-examined. The case was reported by the BBC.

R v A – Birmingham Crown Court – Attempted Murder

Claire represented the defendant, who faced two offences of attempted murder committed over two years apart. He was alleged to be the lead offender in multi-handed revenge attacks carried out with multiple weapons. The case involved significant telephone evidence, which required careful examination.

R v K – Oxford Crown Court – Conspiracy to Murder

Claire represented the defendant, who was accused of conspiracy to murder a man who was attacked with both a gun and a Rambo knife, and who sustained lifelong injuries. The case involved complex legal issues arising from the

allegations on the indictment. The defendant was said to have travelled with others to obtain the gun and knife that were then used, and to have been the man on the ground ensuring the main attacker was kept updated on the movements of the intended target. He was also accused of trying to ensure that CCTV was destroyed. Detailed analysis of hours of CCTV evidence, telephone downloads, and call data established that the defendant was simply a drugs dealer. The jury acquitted Claire's client of all counts. Claire was instructed and assisted by Knightwood Solicitors.

R v E – Wood Green Crown Court – Murder

Claire represented one of four defendants in a real-life whodunnit. The prosecution case was that the defendant and another were present in the flat when two others entered, leading to a fifth male present having his throat cut and being left to die while the others fled the scene. All four were said to be party to the joint enterprise. In a highly tactical defence, Claire's client was the only one to be acquitted of murder, manslaughter, and assisting an offender.

R v B – Central Criminal Court – Conspiracy to Murder, Murder, Conspiracy to Possess a Firearm with Intent to Endanger Life

Claire was instructed to defend in an alleged gang-related murder in which the victim was killed in a shooting. CCTV and phone data were used to identify the defendants. The case involved extensive consideration and challenge of cell site and GPS tag readings, phone expert evidence, and bad character evidence — namely gang-related evidence, drill music videos, and hearsay. The trial was heard over three months at the Old Bailey, and Claire's client was first on the indictment. After two weeks of deliberations, the jury convicted four of the remaining five defendants and could not reach a verdict on Claire's client. Following a retrial, Claire's client was acquitted of all counts.

R v R – Luton Crown Court – Manslaughter

Claire represented the defendant in a manslaughter trial following an altercation in a bank with an elderly lady suffering from dementia. The defendant herself was vulnerable, and complex issues of causation and mental health arose. A suspended sentence was imposed following mitigation.

R v P – Central Criminal Court – Murder, Manslaughter, Attempted murder and GBH

Claire represented the defendant, a rapper who was 19 at the time of the offences, in a five-week multi-handed trial. The case involved joint enterprise murder and attempted murder, following the stabbing of another young man in the back multiple times during a knife fight, with a second man sustaining life-threatening injuries. The client subsequently fled the jurisdiction before returning to be arrested. He was the only defendant to be acquitted of all charges. The case was reported by The Independent and The Mirror.

R v D – Birmingham Crown Court – Murder

Claire represented a young defendant who required an intermediary in a seven-week multi-handed cut-throat joint enterprise murder trial. The deceased was being robbed of a motorcycle when he was chased by the main defendant, with Claire's defendant following behind, brandishing knives. The main defendant went on to stab the victim multiple times. The defendant was acquitted of murder and convicted of manslaughter.

R v T – Basildon Crown Court – Murder

Claire represented a defendant who was originally indicted for murder. The defendant had gone into a public house with a crossbow and shot the first person he saw in the chest. When stopped by police, he was also found in possession of knives. Advice was given as to psychiatric reports, and as a result, following representations, a plea to manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility was accepted. The case was reported by ITV News.

R v S – Coventry Crown Court – Murder

Claire represented the main defendant in a multi-handed cut-throat murder. Following a chance meeting in which the defendant was stabbed by the victim, he and others chased the victim in revenge and stabbed him, causing his death later that day. Bad character applications were advanced.

R v T – Warwick Crown Court – Revenge Murder

Claire represented the defendant in a multi-handed revenge murder. The defendant was part of a group who, in revenge for a previous assault that evening and an ongoing tit-for-tat over a drug debt, set out with weapons in a car deliberately to run down the victim and his group. The defendant faced a cut-throat defence from the co-defendant who was the driver of the vehicle, with significant bad character arguments throughout the trial from both the prosecution and co-defendants. He was acquitted of murder and attempted murder, but convicted of manslaughter and s20/s47 offences. The case was reported by the BBC.

R v S – Lincoln Crown Court – Murder

Claire represented the defendant, who, along with another, was accused of assaulting a friend while drunk. Having beaten him up, they then put him in the canal and left him to drown. The defendant was acquitted of murder and convicted of manslaughter.

R v M – Luton Crown Court – Murder

Claire represented the defendant, who was accused of murdering his 'drinking buddy' by driving at him in revenge for not allowing him into the property earlier in the day. Experts were called in relation to diminished responsibility, arising from the entrenched alcoholism the defendant suffered from. The case involved complex legal arguments concerning manslaughter.

R v S – Luton Crown Court – Murder

Claire represented the defendant, a drug dealer, who had been robbed at knifepoint by the deceased and was then said to have chased him down in his car and deliberately driven at him, wanting revenge and to kill him. The defendant was acquitted of murder.

R v T – Birmingham Crown Court – Attempted Murder

Claire represented the main defendant in a multi-handed gang attempted murder trial before Mr Justice Hilliard. The defendants had gone on a ride-out to protect their territory, and upon seeing others perceived to be rivals, they chased them on foot. The defendant shot a 13-year-old in the back with a slam gun, leaving him paralysed for life. The case involved challenges to significant cell site, firearms, and complex DNA evidence, including challenges to the robustness of the validation process when dealing with incredibly low-level DNA. The case was reported by the BBC.

R v R&R – Central Criminal Court – HSE Manslaughter

Claire represented the defendant, the site manager for works being undertaken on a project in the Docklands. During the demolition phase, a large window weighing a tonne fell on a worker, crushing him to death. After detailed cross-examination during the prosecution case, representations were made, and the prosecution accepted a plea to breach of the HSA and did not proceed with the manslaughter charge.

R v B – Central Criminal Court – Conspiracy to Murder (contract killings)

Claire represented the defendant in a two-month, multi-handed triple conspiracy to murder trial — namely, contract killings said to arise as part of an OCG, targeting rival gang crime bosses. The defendant was said to have recruited others and to have been the main organiser, securing the sourcing of firearms and conducting surveillance, as well as

recruiting the hitmen. The case was tactically complex, involving cell site, lip-reading, voice recognition, and linguist experts.

R v O; R v O Ltd – Chelmsford Crown Court – Corporate Manslaughter

Claire represented the defendant in a corporate manslaughter and health and safety prosecution, following a subcontractor's fatal fall through a roof. Expert evidence was given by a Senior Environmental Health Officer, Senior Health and Safety Inspectors, a Chartered Quantity Surveyor, and a Structural Engineer. The defence involved allegations of collusion by some prosecution witnesses and was run cut-throat against the subcontracting organisation. The case was reported by the Enfield Independent.

Fraud and Financial Crime

R v R – Southwark Crown Court – Money Laundering

Claire represented one of only two defendants acquitted in a ten-week, multi-handed money laundering trial. The prosecution alleged that the defendant was involved in a sophisticated international money laundering network that transferred over £20 million out of the jurisdiction. The defence deployed electronic material, which had been discounted by the investigators, to great effect during the course of the trial.

R v M – Southwark Crown Court – VAT Fraud

Claire represented the defendant in a multi-handed, multi-million-pound film industry VAT fraud, described as the 'linchpin' between two groups of alleged offenders. The investigation took place over a 10-year period, and following challenges to disclosure, the prosecution was forced to offer no evidence weeks into the trial.

R v S – Isleworth Crown Court – Royal Mail Fraud

Claire represented a director and the company accused of a £6m Royal Mail fraud committed over five years. The case involved abuse of process arguments, as the company's assets were restrained.

R v S – Kingston Crown Court (4 months) – Duty Evasion and Money Laundering

Claire represented a defendant who is the director of a company that was the international arm of a conspiracy involving duty evasion of cigarettes and money laundering in excess of £12m against HMRC.

R v S – Wood Green Crown Court – Fraud

Claire represented the defendant in a multi-handed international conspiracy to defraud, valued at approximately £3m. The case involved significant volumes of paperwork and telephone evidence, and Claire secured the only acquittal in the trial.

R v I – Woolwich Crown Court – Conspiracy to Defraud

Claire represented the defendant in a multi-handed conspiracy to defraud, involving Apple Pay fraud with compromised details, and a vast amount of telephone evidence and downloads as part of the Crown's case.

R v A – Southwark Crown Court – Proceeds of Crime

Claire represented the defendant in a highly organised car-ringing conspiracy, in which high-value vehicles were stolen and dismantled for onward sale. Claire's client was the only defendant acquitted across a series of trials.

R v R – Snaresbrook Crown Court – Diamond Fraud

Claire represented the client, an employee of the co-defendants, who was accused of selling diamonds that either did not exist or were of poor quality. The application for dismissal was successful.

Terrorism

R v M – Central Criminal Court – Terrorism

Claire represented the defendant, who was accused of funding terrorism and possessing prohibited terrorism material, some of the most graphic to date.

R v P – Attempted Murder/Terrorism

Claire represented the defendant, who faced one count of attempted murder. The case was declared the first act of terrorism in the UK for a number of years. The defendant was said to be a right-wing extremist who attempted to publish a manifesto after his actions, and the case involved significant legal arguments concerning 'mindset' material.

Sexual offences

R v V – Rape

Claire represented the defendant, who faced multiple sexual offences in relation to a young woman he was dating. Claire extracted and deployed messages between the parties to demonstrate a lack of credibility, and a close examination of the forensic and CCTV evidence supported the defendant's account. The defendant was acquitted.

R v M – Rape

Claire represented the defendant, who faced multiple rape counts and related offences. He was accused by a partner of taking her to a hotel, drugging her, raping her, and suffocating her. The defence case was that it was a fabrication and that any sexual activity was consensual. The defendant was acquitted of all counts.

R v A – Historic Rapes

Claire represented the defendant, who was accused of rape on multiple occasions from over 25 years ago. At the time he was a GP, and the complainant his patient, who had sought his help for a termination following her being raped and therefore facing an unwanted pregnancy. The defendant was acquitted on all counts after trial.

R v E – Historic Rape and Indecent Assaults

Claire represented the defendant, who was accused of rape and indecent assaults on three complainants from over 20 years ago, over a three-year period. All were his employees, aged 15–18 at the time, and the case involved alleged grooming and controlling of the most vulnerable due to personal circumstances. The defendant was acquitted of all counts after trial.

R v B – Rape, Sexual Exploitation

Claire represented the defendant, who faced allegations of rape and physical assault over a 15-year period. He was said to control the household by terror. The defendant was acquitted of all the allegations at trial.

R v C – Rape, Sexual Exploitation

Claire was sole junior for the main defendant in a multi-handed case, against a prosecution led by a QC and junior at trial. The defendant faced multiple rape counts, supply of Class A drugs, and arranging the sexual exploitation of, and taking and distributing indecent images of, a 14-year-old who was deemed vulnerable. The case involved an intermediary for the complainant. The defendant was acquitted of the rape counts and of supplying drugs. The case attracted national press coverage, reported by the BBC.

R v M – Historic Rape and Sexual Assaults

Claire represented the defendant in relation to historic allegations dating back to the 1960s, including allegations of rape. The defendant was extradited to face trial. The case involved many witnesses, now of some age, with some vulnerabilities, including the defendant and prosecution witnesses. Hearsay and bad character applications were successfully defended, and the defendant was acquitted.

R v W – Rape

Claire represented the defendant, who was alleged to have committed rape upon a female whom he had met that night, who was a lesbian. Significant volumes of telephone evidence were disclosed the week before trial, and detailed consideration led to a successful s41 application. The defendant was acquitted.

R v K – Rape, attempted Rape and Sexual Assault

Claire represented the defendant in a case involving more than one complainant, in which the defendant posed as a taxi driver to lure intoxicated women into his vehicle before sexually assaulting them. Rare expert evidence on statistical genetics in relation to DNA was called by the Crown, and a successful application to exclude identification evidence followed a voir dire.

Serious Organised Crime

R v A – Birmingham Crown Court – Drugs Conspiracy

Claire represented the defendant, one of 22 involved in a conspiracy to supply Class A drugs. He was the main supplier of heroin to the OCG, flying to and from Pakistan to arrange the supplies. The case involved significant telephone evidence and cross-examination of experts.

R v C – Chelmsford Crown Court – Drugs Importation

Claire represented the defendant in a case involving the importation of £9m worth of cocaine.

R v G – Nottingham Crown Court – Drugs Conspiracy

Claire represented the defendant, one of 13 who faced a conspiracy to supply Class A drugs. He was accused of being a middleman in the conspiracy, which was moving kilos of cocaine from Nottinghamshire to Warwickshire/Lincolnshire. There were significant volumes of telephone evidence linking the defendant to others in

the trial, and the police had undertaken surveillance on several defendants; text messages were adduced, and Encro phones were found during the police operation. The defendant was the only one to be acquitted of all charges after a seven-week trial.

R v U – Chelmsford Crown Court – Drugs Conspiracy

Claire represented the defendant, a trusted lieutenant in Essex's most prolific and largest-ever drugs conspiracy and money laundering operation, running between 2017 and 2021 and continuing while the defendant was in prison.

R v M – Central Criminal Court – Possession of firearm with intent to kill

Claire represented the defendant, who, along with another, was accused of driving at night and shooting into the residential home of another. Claire deployed the contents of the defendant's mobile phone to establish he was an innocent dupe, and the defendant was acquitted after trial.

R v W – Isleworth Crown Court – Conspiracy to Transfer Firearm

Claire represented the defendant, who, along with three others, was accused of organising the transfer of a disguised firearm. The defendant was said to be the central figure storing the firearm, and there was significant use of telephone evidence throughout the trial.

Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking

R v A – Cardiff Crown Court – Trafficking/Exploitation and Drugs

Claire represented the main defendant in a multi-handed modern slavery and drugs conspiracy. The case concerned the supply of drugs across county lines, involving in excess of 150,000 pages of evidence, including significant telephone evidence requiring detailed consideration. The defendant received a not guilty verdict on modern slavery.

R v C – Birmingham Crown Court (5 months) – Modern Slavery/Trafficking

Claire represented the defendant in Europe's largest modern slavery prosecution, involving in excess of 70 complainants and 200 nominals. The defendant was pivotal to the conspiracy, working in the recruitment agency that placed the workers. Evidence was given via other jurisdictions, involving over 1 million pages of evidence. Following submissions at the close of the prosecution case, the trafficking counts were conceded by the prosecution.

R v U – Isleworth Crown Court – Trafficking/sexual exploitation

Claire represented the main defendant in a multi-handed and rare prosecution for trafficking out of the UK for sexual services. The client, having been released from prison, abducted girls from foster care and then arranged their departure. The case involved substantial hearsay arguments and complex Court of Appeal proceedings, with significant disclosure issues following trial.

R v K – Isleworth Crown Court – Trafficking/Immigration Breaches

Claire represented the defendant in a multi-handed case, in which the defendant brought non-EU nationals into the UK on several occasions. The case involved a significant volume of telephone evidence.

Other Jurisdictions

R v L – Gibraltar Supreme Court

Claire represented the defendant, who faced allegations of arson, including a row of houses being destroyed after being set ablaze. A successful submission of no case was made in relation to the main arson charge, and the client was acquitted of all other counts by the jury. The prosecution was conducted by a QC and junior.

Memberships

Professional Memberships

- Leader of South Eastern Circuit
- Criminal Bar Association
- Proceeds of Crime Lawyers Association
- Fraud Lawyers Association
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- Women in Criminal Law
- Middle Temple

Other Information

- Bencher Middle Temple
- Advocacy Trainer
- Qualified Vulnerable Witness Trainer